MEMORANDUM
To: Richard Edelman
From: Gary Schoener
Date: 6/18/69

Re: Death and autopsy of Dorothy Killgallen

Info: Received through conversation with Professor Gilbert J. Mannering, Department of Pharmacology, Rm 102 Mayo Hospital. Professor Mannering is an expert on Alcohol in the body and is utilized by the state for autopsy work in this area.

There are many factors which affect the alcohol found by an autopsy, the most notable of which are the state in which the body was kept prior to the autopsy (i.e. was it frozen), how long after death the body was put on ice, and how long after death the autopsy was performed, and where the blood samples were taken from. Over a period of a week, for instance, if the body was not on ice, not embalmed, there could be considerable diffusion of any alcohol in the stomach into the rest of the body. The best place from which to take blood samples would be, of course, from some very peripheral vessels, as in the skin, or best of all, in the brain.

Barbiturates are also affected by the above factors, and, in addition, we must further be concerned with what type of barbiturates, since each is deadly in different amounts. In the event that we can get more specific data, I am certain that Professor Mannering would be of much further help.

Recommendations for further research: See if there is any way of getting the amounts of barbiturate and alcohol reportedly found in the bloodstream, either in amount per liter of blood, or per kg of body weight. In the event that the figure is given in terms of concentration in the blood, it would be very helpful to know her approximate body weight. Further, the type of barbiturate is very important. Some of this info must be available, because there was a lot of talk at the time about there not having been much barbiturate present.

Then, per your suggestion, attempt to find any mention that she had a prescription for barbiturates, and if so, find out what type.

It might be good to check the Journal-American for this stuff since they should have a more complete report than anyone. Then, perhaps, there might be someone from the old Journal-American (perhaps whoever wrote her an obituary editorial) who would know more details, or have seen the autopsy, even if they didn't print it.

After exhausting all public sources (don't forget checking Time, Newsweek, and U.S News and World Report just in case, you might try approaching her husband. If you do you should emphasize that you are a student, will not under any circumstances commercialize this (and would be willing to sign a written agreement to that fact), and are concerned about the nature of her death. Your interest, you might say, derives from your respect for her as a crusading columnist, and also your interest in the assassination. The story, as reported by the press, has many irregularities, especially with regard to the cause of death. Tell him that you would like the exact details in the autopsy so that you could submit them, in confidence (and without reference to her name), to several top pathologists for their opinion. Ask also about any prescription for barbiturates, what kind, her use of them, etc. Then ask about the possibility that she had a drink somewhere prior to bed, and ask if he has any ideas where she might have done this, etc.

He may very well agree to a talk. Sometimes it is better to preceed it with a carefully worded letter. It has been several years and the grief should be gone. Perhaps he also has questions. And, of course, there is the old question as to what she learned from Ruby: does he know of notes, did she talk about it, what about the alleged quote that she would blow the case wide open, does he know of anyone else (friends, NY Journal-American people) who might have been privy to her secrets or of a detective agency or something of the like she might have utilized.